

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ACCRA 05187 071633Z

ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 A-01 OPR-02 SY-05 CIAE-00
COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 AID-05
MCT-01 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 DODE-00
PM-04 H-01 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
/088 W

-----088692 071641Z /43

O R 071554Z JUL 77

FM AMEMBASSY ACCRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8990

INFO AMEMBASSY COTONOU

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L ACCRA 5187

LONDON FOR SEITZ

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ENTRG, PINT, PINS, PGOV, GH

SUBJ: POWER SHUT-DOWN FORCES VALCO CUT-BACK

REF: ACCRA 5104

1. SUMMARY. POWER FAILURE EVENING JULY 6 FORCES US-OWNED VOLTA ALUMINUM CO. (VALCO), TO HALT ALUMINUM PRODUCTION FROM THREE OF FIVE POTLINES. BESIDES SUBSTANTIAL LOSS TO COMPANY, CUT-BACK WILL REDUCE GOG'S FOREIGN EXCHANGE RECEIPTS FROM ELECTRICITY SALES. INCIDENT ADDS TO MOUNTING PROBLEMS FACED BY ACHEAMPONG REGIME. END SUMMARY.

2. EVENING JULY 6, TWO OF SIX GENERATORS AT AKOSOMBO DAM STOPPED. OVERLOAD CAUSED AUTOMATIC SHUT-OFF REMAINING GENERATORS. AFTER ONE HOU, ONE GENERATOR RETURNED, BUT OTHER GENERATORS DID NOT RESUME OPERATION UNTIL LATE EVENING.

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PAGE 02 ACCRA 05187 071633Z

SHUT-DOWN HALTED FLOW OF ELECTRIC POWER TO VALCO ALUMINUM SMELTER IN TEMA. DESPITE STRENUOUS EFFORTS OF VALCO RESIDENT DIRETRO, VOLTA RIVER AUTHORITY (VRA), (GOG AGENCY OPERATING DAM), DID NOT RESTORE FULL POWER TO PLANT UNTIL LATE EVENING. GRADUAL RESTORATION OF POWER ONLY ALLOWED COMPANY TO KKEP TWO OF FIVE POTLINES OPERATIING.

3. AS RESULT, ALUMINUM MUST BE REMOVED FROM THREE "COLD" POTLINES AND EQUIPMENT REPAIRED AND REPLACED. RESIDENT DIRECTOR ESTIMATES IT WILL TAKE UP TO THREE MONTHS FOR COMPANY TO RESUME NORMAL OPERATIONS. COST OF REPAIRS AND LOSS OF PRODUCTION COULD BE AS MUCH AS THREE-TO-FIVE MILLION DOLLARS. UNCERTAIN AS TO WHAT EFFECTS SLOW-DOWN WILL HAVE ON LABOR FORCE.

4. BESIDES SIZEABLE LOSS TO VALCO, CUT-BACK WILL SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCE FOREIGN EXCHANGE PAYMENTS FOR ELECTRICITY TO GOG. ACCORDING TO ONE SOURCE, VRA SUSPECTS -- BUT CANNOT PROVE -- THAT POWER FAILURE ARE WORK OF ENGINEERS PROTESTING AGAINST ACHEAMPONG REGIME.

5. COMMENT: THIS IS ONE MORE PROBLEM FACING BESIEGED GOVERNMENT AND ADDS TO CRISIS ATMOSPHERE. POWER FAILURE IS SECOND THIS WEEK. IN SPITE OF STRONG GOG STATEMENT TO CONTRARY, MOST GHANAIANS BELIEVE THAT FIRST INCIDENT PART OF ENGINEERS' PROTEST. SECOND POWER FAILURE CERTAIN TO BOLSTER THEIR BELIEF.
SMITH

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NNN

Message Attributes

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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 07-Jul-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
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TAGS: ENRG, PINT, PINS, PGOV, GH
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